

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2210

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to authorizing agreements between community and technical colleges and four-year institutions of higher education to provide degree programs.

Brief Description: Authorizing agreements between community and technical colleges and four-year institutions of higher education to provide degree programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Priest, Nixon, Ericks, Simpson, Eickmeyer, Dunn, Haler, Woods, Hankins, Sells, Tom and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 3/1/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Subject to legislative appropriation to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, authorizes agreements between community and technical colleges and public four-year institutions of higher education to offer baccalaureate programs on the college campus.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Fromhold, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Roberts and Sommers.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Dunn, Jarrett and Priest.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The two-plus-two model of higher education is provided in Washington in several ways. Four branch campuses offer upper-division and graduate coursework. There are also a number of university centers where four-year institutions have collaborated with community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees off the main university campus. Most centers represent fewer than

25 students in a single degree program. Only six centers enroll more than 100 full-time equivalent students.

Decisions about whether to offer a degree program off-campus and what programs to offer rest with the four-year institutions. No state funding is provided directly for this purpose. Some institutions allocate state-supported enrollment to center programs. Others offer programs only where the costs can be self-sustaining. A recent analysis of baccalaureate capacity by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) showed regional gaps in access for placebound students seeking degrees through a two-plus-two model. However, if limited funding is provided for additional enrollment, a four-year institution must decide whether to expand access through off-campus programs or focus on the main campus.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Subject to legislative appropriation for this purpose, a community or technical college can enter into an agreement with a regional university, The Evergreen State College, or a branch campus to offer baccalaureate degree programs on the college campus. Alternatively, the SBCTC could enter into a master agreement to offer programs on multiple campuses.

Allocation of funds among colleges must be based on analysis of gaps in service delivery, capacity, and student and employer demand for programs. Students enrolled in these programs are considered students of the four-year institution or branch campus for all purposes, including tuition and reporting of state-funded enrollment.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (In support) This approach offers another way to have flexibility in achieving the goal of increasing access to baccalaureate degrees. It takes advantage of the two-plus-two model, which is efficient and cost-effective. It recognizes the unique strengths of two- and four-year institutions and enables collaboration to articulate programs. This creates an opportunity to bring more four-year universities to community college campuses to offer their programs in specific areas of demand. Even if the current enrollment plans of the campuses were fully funded, there would still be areas of the state with unmet demand for upper-division access. This approach is complimentary to others being discussed by the Legislature.

(Concerns) There is a role for the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) in looking at how baccalaureate degrees are offered. There should be objective standards for cost-effectiveness and quality applied to all programs and the HECB should participate in that effort.

Testimony Against: It is not clear what problem is addressed. There is no mention of the HECB, and they have an important role to play in baccalaureate access. Two-plus-two programs already exist, so it is not clear why the funding would go to the SBCTC. There is a need to step back and figure out how to maximize limited resources.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Priest, prime sponsor; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Gary Livingston, Community Colleges of Spokane; Jill Wakefield, South Seattle Community College; and Jeff Gombosky, Eastern Washington University.

(Concerns) Jim Sulton, Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(Opposed) Edie Harding, The Evergreen State College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.